

# Energy Savings for Every Season



No matter the season, there is always a way to save electricity around the house.

**SAVING MONEY ON UTILITY BILLS** through greater energy efficiency is a year-round objective for many co-op members, but the methods for achieving this goal change with the seasons in Texas.

Several factors affect energy efficiency, including weather, the age and condition of your home, and desired comfort levels. During fall and winter months, when it's cooler outdoors, you'll want a warm home as you seek to keep the cold air out. In the spring and summer, the focus is on keeping hot air from infiltrating cool abodes.

## Fall and Winter: Keeping Heat In

To maintain a warm indoor environment in chilly weather, there are simple steps you can take to increase energy efficiency.

There's no better time to examine seals on doors and windows for air leaks. Caulk and weatherstrip as needed to seal in warm air and energy savings. Similarly, examine electrical outlets for air leaks, and where necessary, install foam gaskets behind them to prevent drafts.

During the day, open curtains or drapes on south-facing windows to let sunlight heat your home naturally. Close window treatments at night for an added layer of insulation.

As the temperature drops, schedule a service appointment for your heating system to ensure that it is operating at an optimal level.

Low-cost or no-cost steps for energy savings include affixing heavy, clear plastic to the insides of your windowpanes to create an additional barrier against cold air. Ensure that the plastic is sealed tightly to the pane to help reduce infiltration.

Use a programmable thermostat to set the temperature as low as is comfortable when you are home (ideally around 68 degrees). When you are asleep or away, turn the temperature down. A downward adjustment of 10–15 degrees over long stretches of time can save about 10 percent a year on heating and cooling costs, according to the Department of Energy.

## Spring and Summer: Keeping Your Cool

During warm months, energy savings and efficiency will require different measures, many of which are just as inexpensive.

Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep the sun's warming rays at bay. Where practical, plant trees and shrubs that offer shade in summer and allow sunlight through in winter.

In extremely hot weather, your cooling system works harder to close the gap between the high outdoor temperature and the cool indoor thermostat setting. To lessen the difference and lower cooling costs, set the thermostat as high as you can while maintaining your comfort level.

Employing a ceiling fan in conjunction with your air conditioning can allow you to increase the thermostat setting by about 4 degrees with no reduction in comfort. Just make sure to turn ceiling fans off when no one is in the room.

Use a programmable thermostat to adjust the settings a few degrees higher when nobody is home or your family is sleeping.

During the hottest months, it's all the more critical to replace any remaining incandescent lightbulbs with light-emitting diode bulbs. The unwanted heat from the old bulbs affects energy use.

To learn about additional energy-saving tips and programs, contact Coleman County Electric Cooperative at 1-800-560-2128.

# Smoke Alarm Safety

**ON AVERAGE, EIGHT PEOPLE DIE IN HOUSE FIRES EVERY DAY IN THE U.S.**—almost 3,000 people every year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Although working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire nearly in half, roughly two-thirds of all house-fire deaths still occur in homes without working smoke alarms.

Newer smoke alarm recommendations and technologies provide greater protection than ever before. Coleman County Electric Cooperative has some tips for making sure your smoke alarms are working properly to keep your family safe.

▶ Smoke detectors should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of multistory homes.

▶ For the best protection, alarms should be interconnected so that they all sound if one sounds. Manufacturers now are producing battery-operated alarms that are interconnected by wireless technology.

▶ Combination smoke alarms that include ionization and photoelectric alarms offer the most comprehensive protection. An ionization alarm is more responsive to flames, while a photoelectric alarm is more responsive to a smoldering fire.

▶ Hardwired smoke detectors with battery backups are more reliable than those powered solely by batteries.

▶ Install smoke detectors at least 10 feet from cooking appliances to reduce nuisance alarms. Alarms installed within 10–20 feet of a cooking appliance must be photoelectric or have a hush feature to temporarily reduce the alarm sensitivity.

▶ If possible, alarms should be mounted in the center of the ceiling. If mounted on a wall, an alarm should be located 6–12 inches below the ceiling.

▶ Smoke alarms should be tested once a month, and batteries should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, at least once a year. If an alarm “chirps” or “beeps” to indicate low batteries, they should be replaced immediately.

▶ Occasionally dust or lightly vacuum the exterior of the alarm.

▶ Smoke alarms should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, at least every 10 years.



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**Choose hardwired detectors with battery backups over alarms powered by batteries alone.**

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*Operating in Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Coke, Concho, Runnels, Taylor and Tom Green counties*

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**colemanelectric.org**

## Power Tip

The average household owns 24 consumer electronics products, which are responsible for 12 percent of household electricity use, according to the Consumer Electronics Association. Using power strips and unplugging chargers when not in use can help minimize electronics’ wasted power.



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